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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the persistence of the cultural underlay permeating West Virginians' life styles today, this study determined: (1) which cultural values identified with Appalachian culture are endorsed by West Virginia Extension Agents and reflected in their work; (2) which of these cultural values reflect a distinctive Appalachian subculture; and (3) the extent to which endorsement of these values is associated with effectiveness in extension work. The reflection and endorsement of 9 selected Appalachian cultural values (familism, neighborliness, love of home place, individualism, personalism, Modesty, being one's self, sense of humor, religion) in educational programming of extension agents were assessed is West Virginia (an Appalachian state), North Dakota (a rural state), and New Jersey (an urban state). Field agents in the 3 states were given a Kluckholn type questionnaire and a Likert type attitudinal scale. Comparison of means, frequencies, and percentages of response to the instruments were utilized for analysis of differences between states and groups within states. Some findings were: (1) West Virginia agents were sensitive to and endorsed Appalachian cultural values, especially the individualism cluster; and (2) differences in the endorsement of Appalachian cultural values among the 3 states' agents indicated the continued existence of an Appalachian subculture. (Author/NQ)

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CULTURAL VALUES INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING IN WEST VIRGINIA

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF CULTURAL VALUES INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING IN WEST VIRGINIA

In recognition of the apparent persistence of the cultural underlay permeating in varying degrees the life style of West Virginians today, the research problem was three-fold. (1) Which of the cultural values identified with Appalachian culture are endorsed by West Virginia Extension Agents and reflected in their work? (2) Which of these cultural values seem to reflect a distinctive Appalachian subculture? (3) To what extent is endorsement of these values associated with effectiveness in extension work?

Procedure

The study was conceptualized in a context in which culture was broadly conceived as a way of life and the distinctive value structure guiding Appalachian behavior, reflecting the ontological and cosmological framework underlying the Appalachian way of life.

The reflection and endorsement of nine selected Appalachian cultural values in educational programming of extension agents in West Virginia, an Appalachian state; North Dakota, a rural, non-Appalachian state; and New Jersey, an urban, non-Appalachian state were assessed.

Data were obtained from total field agent population of the three study states. Therefore, comparison of means, frequencies, and percentages of response to the instrument were utilized for analysis of differences between states and groups within states.

Findings

1. West Virginia agents were found to be sensitive to and endorse Appalachian cultural values with greatest sensitivity being related to the Individualism cluster of cultural values.

Sensitivity to cultural values was considerably influenced by age and tenure of agents.

2. Differences in the endorsement of Appalachian cultural values among West Virginia, North Dakota, and New Jersey agents indicated the continued existence of an Appalachian subculture in varying degrees.

Significant differences were found in the degree of cultural variability within West Virginia characterizing the heterogeneity of the Appalachian region.

3. A substantial relationship was found among age, tenure, and effectiveness of West Virginia agents. Older, more experienced, more effective agents were found to be more sensitive to Appalachian cultural values in extension educational programming.

The findings of the study indicate the desirability of the development of a training program to sensitize young extension agents to the cultural values of the region on a functional programming level. Training designed to fit educational programs into the cultural context of clientele, training in the identification and understanding of the heterogeneous character of the Appalachian subculture, and development of respect and appreciation for Appalachian cultural values would serve as basic components of such a program.

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APPALACHIA - PERENNIAL TARGET FOR DEVELOPMENT

Appalachia is a region set apart both geographically and statistically. Its common tie is its mountainous terrain boldly upthrust between the prosperous eastern seaboard and the industrial Midwest.[1] The Appalachian Regional Commission defines the area as a highland region which sweeps diagonally across thirteen states from Northern Mississippi to Southern New York and divides it into four sub-regions: southern, central, northern, and highlands.

Appalachia has been the perennial target of programs designed to help the poor. Efforts have repeatedly encountered limited success and from all evidence today, the inequities outlined by the 1964 Report of the Appalachian Regional Commission continue to persist.

Thus it is that Appalachia has become symbolic of poverty to Americans; characterized as a land of poor people amidst rich natural resources. To some observers, Appalachia is a prime example of colonialism within our own shores, characterized by long time exploitation of natural and human resources by absentee owners. The yoke of this type of colonialism has resulted in the paradox of the nation's poorest and most deprived populace dwelling amid the nation's richest region in terms of natural resources.[2]

The impetus for this research arose out of the proposition that a major reason programs designed to cure the ills of poverty in Appalachia have not met with success is because they were imposed upon the people and not developed in the context of their culture and its values. Only when developed in the cultural context at the level of the people will programs possess the potential for long term corrective action.

As John Friedman, writing on the Perspectives of the Problem of Appalachia, observed in the April, 1968, issue of Appalachia, the official Journal of the Appalachian Regional Commission: "Programs such as these will not be easy to conceive and carry out. They will require a much better understanding of the spatial structure of the region and of the social and cultural patterns of the communities within it. Programs focused on people rather than objects need to be subtle, diversified, nonbureaucratic, and responsive to their values; they must be conducted by very expert hands. Yet for all the problems they present, they are critical components of a development strategy for a poor region in a rich country."[3]

APPALACHIAN CULTURE

Over the years a substantial body of literature has been compiled on Appalachian culture. Evidence indicates the Appalachian culture continues to persist in varying degrees throughout the region and failure to recognize this has contributed to ineffectual social and educational programming.

A REGION IN TRANSITION

Appalachia has been characterized as a region of contrasts. It is comprised of variations in life style, moving from the deep core of relatively great isolation at the center to the fringe areas that have greater access to the large society.[4]

Within this spectrum one finds rural and urban families, poverty and affluence, subsistence and commercial farming, coal miners and coal mine owners, alienation and hope, isolation and communication.[5] Dr. Earl D. C. Brewer described the region as ". . . an interplay between stability and change; isolation and contrast; the primitive and progressive. Where else can one find such contrasts as Elizabethan folklore and atomic reactors; planting by the moon and scientific agriculture; medieval demonology and modern medicine; beliefs that God sends floods to wipe out the sinful as in Noah's time and TVA; the primitive Protestant emphasis on individualism and the overloaded welfare roles?"[6]

At the same time, Photiadis pointed out that due to the physical makeup, isolation and homogeneity of the mountain culture, the Appalachian Region has functioned as a semiautonomous social system. The system retained or modified a particular set of beliefs upon which its ideology and value orientations were based. This belief system and its ideology were strongly influenced by two things: (1) the beliefs and value orientations of the early settlers,[7] and (2) the type of interaction patterns fostered by the physical make-up of the region.[8]

How much the cultural background and homogeneity of the early settlers, the physical make-up of the region and its isolation from the surrounding culture have contributed to making Appalachia different in beliefs and values from the outside, including rural people elsewhere, is difficult to ascertain.[9]

Campbell noted that there are "difficulties in the way of writing of a people, who, while forming a definite geographical and social group, were by no means socially homogeneous."[10] Even so, most people living within Appalachia have come out of the subculture and so share it as a background.

No culture is simply a collection of traits, but each has its distinctive attributes and emphasis. The distinctive themes of Appalachian culture in earlier days were not difficult to identify, since they attracted the attention of practically all who wrote about the region. In examining the web of mountain life, one finds themes of individualism, traditionalism, fatalism and religion intertwined and generally, though not always, supporting. Most so-called "mountain traits" are to be found in one form or another throughout the nation, particularly in rural areas.[11] Photiadis contended that these same values have occupied a higher rank in the hierarchy of the value orientation of the rural Appalachian as compared to the orientation of those in urban centers and those outside the region.[12]

To a considerable extent the popular but erroneous impression of a homogeneous mountain culture stems from the fact that most contemporary studies have been of isolated communities, often selected because they reflected a way of life rapidly disappearing from the remainder of the region. Not only has this bias created a false impression of homogeneity, but it has also tended to obscure the tremendous cultural changes that have been taking place for many years.[13]

The Southern Appalachian people, although they may lag in their social and economic development, are living in the twentieth Century. To be sure, they retain the imprint of their rural cultural background, but for the most part their way of life, their beliefs, their fears and their aspirations are not radically different from those of most Americans.[14]

Sociologists and anthropologists have long recognized that all parts of the culture do not change at an equal rate. As a general rule, the technological aspects are the first to change, followed more slowly by adaptations of social organization to new techniques. Most resistant to change are the sentiments, beliefs and values of the people. So, we may well surmise that the value systems of Appalachian people may still be rooted in the frontier, even though the base of the economy has shifted from agriculture to industry and commerce, and the people themselves have increasingly concentrated in cities and towns.[15]

Many of the value systems which could be considered characteristic of the early Appalachian society could undoubtedly, in one form or another, be found in other segments of American society. Factors considered to be responsible for differentiating Appalachia from other cultures, or, more generally differentiating between any cultures are: (1) variations within a particular type of value system; (2) a combination of certain particular value systems; or (3) the particular ranking of value systems in order of importance. These three factors are considered to be the most crucial in differentiating the Appalachian value system from that of main stream society.[16]

Even though in the eyes of some scholars it might appear that the value system of an Appalachian culture does not differ from mainstream American culture, the particular pattern of values held by Appalachian people tends to set the culture apart.

Values may be viewed as basic components of personality that are developed to a large extent during the early years of life, and change little during the rest of life. Values are criteria within an ontological framework which help decide what is good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant and desirable or undesirable. They are basic determinants of behavior and determine more stable and wider areas of behavior than attitudes or opinions. Knowledge of the value orientation of a given people provides an understanding of their needs and motivations. Hence, values constitute the basis for the nature and integration of the social system of Appalachia.[17]

A BICULTURAL PEOPLE

Lewis observed that Appalachian people, referred to as mountain people, have the ability to assimilate the larger culture if they wish. Her observations depict these people as bicultural, being exposed to values of the greater society as well as to their own heritage. She maintained that they choose values they wish to incorporate into their lives, being ready to accept alternate sets if they should prove more appropriate.[18] Ford in discussing fatalism, also made reference to this ability of Appalachian people to accept whichever set of values that gives most meaning to their immediate situation.[19]

Many, perhaps most of the significant social changes that have come about in the mountains have been brought about through migrants bringing back new ideas, new patterns, new values, or having their kinship come to their new homes where they learn about outside folkways and norms. ". . . My collegues and I are convinced that the Appalachian kinship system has in many ways contributed significantly to the adjustment of migrants and to their personal stability. This is an often overlooked and unappreciated function of the Appalachian family."[20]

Studies and observations thus provide ample evidence the factors which contributed to development and maintenance of the Appalachian culture have to a great extent all but disappeared under the leveling impact of mainstream society over the past fifty years. At the same time, the culture has demonstrated a remarkable persistence, apparently continuing as a cultural underlay permeating with varying degrees of intensity, life throughout the region. Hence, seemingly contradictory conclusions may be drawn from studies of Appalachia. While on the one hand it is still possible to conduct studies of isolated communities (Brown, Weller, Kaplan, et al.) fully reflecting the Appalachian culture of the past, it is equally possible for other natives of the region to move with the greatest ease and freedom in mainstream society without the slightest taint of their cultural heritage showing or professing any personal identity with it. Many residents, thus, are found who no longer identify with or consider themselves Appalachian, yet many of them may still carry much of the Appalachian value pattern. In this they exhibit the long standing (Celtic) cultural characteristic of lacking cultural identify.

It is precisely this heterogeneity of the state of cultural change that lies at the heart of the problem for educational programmers. To be sensitive to the extent to which the cultural heritage is operative among those where least evident or expected, and to be able to function effectively among those where fully in evidence is the challenge confronting those who would be involved in the development of the region.

Of even greater significance is the task of helping Appalachians retain those cultural values and life patterns of substance in the past and of meaning today and not become lost as part of the price of greater participation in mainstream society. The depersonalization accompanying increasing urbanization of society is of ever growing concern. In the face of this, the importance of retaining the person orientation, family and kin relationships and basic religious beliefs which give meaning to life is of increasing significance today. Herein, the Appalachian culture may have much to contribute to the urbanized culture of mainstream America.

PATTERNS OF VALUES

Writers[21] on Appalachian culture generally concur on the predominant pattern of values characterizing the way of life of Appalachian people. Among these are traditionalism, familism, neighborliness, love of home place, individualism, personalism, modesty and being one's self, sense of humor and religion.

Traditionalism

As recent as 1970, Brown, Schwarzweller, and Mangalam found in their studies of Beech Creek, Kentucky, that "... traditionalism, in short, served as the standard of standards, the legitimating principle integrating the various elements of culture and social structure and thereby tending to protect the integrity of this system, maintaining stability, and warding off the system-disturbing influences of modernization."[22] They indicated traditionalism lay back of every aspect of the Beech Creek culture, sanctioning and accounting for the behavior, attitudes, and valued ideas of the people. Most of the beliefs and practices were handed down relatively intact from one generation to another, and because they were the beliefs and practices of fathers and forefathers, they were deemed right; they were prescriptions to be followed.

At the same time, Ford observed that traditionalism is a cultural trait that seems strangely out of place in a national society that so highly prizes progress, achievement and success. However prevalent and strong this value was a generation ago, there is evidence that it has substantially weakened in recent decades.[23]

As long ago as 1899 the people were characterized as "contemporary ancestors,"[24] and a few years later Kephart described the mountaineer as being bound to the past in an amazing way: "their adherence to old ways is stubborn, sullen and perverse to a degree that others cannot comprehend."[25]

As recent as 1970, Weller characterized them as "yesterday's people." He observed that while much of American culture has faced so many changes within the last hundred years as to leave many people virtually rootless, mountain life, as it has continued more or less in its static way, has preserved the old traditions and ideas.[26]

While writers have generally agreed that traditionalism is a dominant value of Appalachian culture, they have not always recognized its interdependence with the religious faith which is perhaps the most important factor which gives meaning to life of Appalachian people.

Familism

Brown and Schwarzweller[27] indicated that the Appalachian family tended to emphasize family traditions. Patterns of behavior, attitudes, the manner of dealing with everyday problems and crises as well as interfamily friendship ties, tend to remain very similar generation after generation, within a given family.

The Appalachian family is less child centered than the average American family; mountain parents are not as permissive, Brown observed, or as non-directive and there is more reliance on physical punishment. The extended family provides additional outlets for fulfillment of children's emotional needs and affection. Children are brought up by parents but kinsfolk share affectional roles with them. Life in Appalachia, especially during frontier times, made it necessary for kin group members to look to each other for many things and to count on each other in times of crises. As a result, the mountaineer holds a deep respect and abiding loyalty to kinsfolk; "this alone may be the key distinguishing feature of the Appalachian family."[28]

Dr. Robert Coles, Harvard psychiatrist, was quoted in a newspaper account of a tour through Kentucky as observing: "Since families mean a lot, in old age they continue to mean a lot. The elderly are usually spared that final sense of abandonment and uselessness so commonly the fate of the middle-class suburban aged."[29]

Weller noted that the only big planned social event in the life of the mountaineer is the family reunion, sometimes attended by several hundred persons. The reunion is usually characterized by sumptuous food, singing, preaching and, or, addresses by political figures.[30]

Brown concluded in his work with migrant families, that the family not only performs the function of telling potential migrants at home about job opportunities and motivating them to move to the city, but educates and socializes them after

they arrive so they know how to behave in the greater society.[31]

The extended family provides the individual with a haven of safety in time of economic crises and a social psychological cushion in time of personal stress. Recent evidence suggests that traditional patterns of family behavior are being disturbed and that stability of the rural Appalachian family is being threatened by the forces of change. There is little doubt that "the Appalachian family and the familistic orientations of mountaineers will play increasingly important roles in facilitating or hindering the processes of future regional development."[32]

Neighborhliness

Closely related to the value of familism and the extended family is the mountaineer's basic quality of neighborliness and hospitality. Jones saw this basic value as somewhat augmenting the strong independence of mountain people. Frontier conditions made it necessary for people to help each other to build houses, raise barns, share work and provide shelter and food for travelers. No greater compliment could be paid a mountain family than referring to them as being "clever." This did not refer to cunningness or intelligence, but indicated they were hospitable and generous with food and lodging.[33]

Love of Home Place

Mountain people never really forget their place of native origin and many return as often as possible. The home place is symbolic of the family and reinforces the fierce family loyalty felt by the mountaineer. There seems to be a sentimental tie with the people and experiences associated with the home place. Simpkins noted that the strong attachment to the land and love of the hills marks every holiday with large numbers of cars, bearing out-of-state license plates, returning to visit home and kin. The tie seems to continue long after they have left the area. Further evidence to support this strong attachment is the large numbers of people brought back from urban areas and nearby states fur burial.[34]

Individualism

Individualism accompanied by self reliance are perhaps the most obvious characteristics of mountain people as observed by Campbell.[35] He saw in the Southern Appalachian, an American, a rural dweller of the agricultural class, and a mountaineer who is still more or less of a pioneer. His dominant trait is independence raised to the fourth power.

Heredity and environment have conspired to make him an extreme individualist. While railroads and highways joined the life of the urban Appalachian to that of the rest of the country over a century of time, the rural Appalachian remained isolated and the existence of the pioneer persisted. His independence became intensified. Circumstances forced him to depend upon his own action until he came to consider independent action not only as a prerogative but a duty. He was the law, not only in the management of affairs within the home, but in the relation of the home to the world without.

Campbell further noted that time was of little importance to the mountaineer; tomorrow would do as well as today. Discipline was exceedingly hard for him to endure and he was very apt to be homesick when long away from the mountains.

Outsiders found it irritating to have plans interrupted for no reason other than that the mountaineer who had promised to help him "just naturally got out of the notion."[36]

As Turner observed nearly a century ago in his writings of the traits manifested on the frontier, "We are not easily aware of the deep influence of this individualistic way of thinking about our present condition. It persists in the midst of a society that has passed away from the conditions that occasioned it."[37]

In his analysis of individualism, Kephart put it this way: "Here then is a key to much that is puzzling in highland character. In the beginning, isolation was forced upon the mountaineers; they accepted it as inevitable and bore it with stocial fortitude until in time they came to love solitude for its own sake and to find compensation in it for lack of society."[38]

A half century later, Weller noted that since hollows where families lived were separated from other hollows and communication was limited, each household tended to live a separate life. Through the years this has caused the mountaineer to come to admire the man who was most independent, both economically and socially. The independent and self reliant spirit remains a valuable asset of any people.[39]

Brown, in his Beech Creek studies, concluded that individualism was an obvious characteristic of the personality and ". . . appeared to have been derived from the basic tenents of puritanism coupled with a firm belief in the ultimate rightness of democracy. It provided the Beech Creeker with an unsettling, but driving strength."[40]

Personalism

Weller has insightfully pointed out that personalism is a style of life in the mountains and that the Appalachian person's primary goal is to have a meaningful relationship with other members in his family and peer group. He is more aware of person-to-person relationships than of a time schedule which must be kept. Each contact is a person to person encounter that takes time.[41]

Jones observed: "Mountain people tend to accept persons as they are. They may not always like other individuals, but they are able to tolerate them. They tend to judge others on a personal basis rather than on how they look, their credentials or accomplishments."[42] A high value is placed on the relationships that exist with other people.

Appalachian people ". . . see other people as whole individuals," observed Simpkins in his writing on personalism. Unlike the urban oriented individual who tends to see other people as objects in specific roles, the Appalachian sees the whole person without much role definition.[43]

Modesty

Most mountain people are modest about their abilities. It is difficult to determine whether this modesty is genuine or is a social mannerism. The mountaineer believes he is as good as anyone else but no better. Jones contended he is one of the most egalitarian persons alive. This belief in equality coupled with his

tendency to be satisfied with whatever fate deals him, has almost completely removed any competetiveness from his makeup. He further contended that mountaineers have a pretty realistic view of themselves--they never believed that man could be perfect.[44] Weller further observed that the Appalachian will go to great lengths to avoid situations where a difference of opinion exists.

Sense of Humor

Humor has sustained mountain people in hard times. Jones saw the mountain man's humor being tied to his concept of man and the human condition. The mountaineer sees humor in man's pretensions to power and perfection and in his inevitable failures. Simpkins brought out that a practical joking kind of humor still exists in the region, particularly in the rural areas.[45]

The humor of Appalachian people is often reflected in their song, story, and speech, for it is here that they have mastered the simile and metaphor. Dial stated that ". . . speakers of Southern Mountain dialect are past masters of the art of coining vivid descriptions. Their everyday conversation is liberally sprinkled with such gems as: 'That man is so contrary, if you throwed him in a river he'd float upstream!' or 'She walks so slow they have to set stakes to see if she's a-movin'!'"[46]

Religion

Religious values so thoroughly permeate the culture of the Appalachian region that it is impossible to treat meaningfully any aspect of life without taking them into consideration. Because religious values underlie so many attitudes and beliefs, they exert complex and frequently subtle influences on behavior which are not always apparent to outside observers or even to the people themselves.[47]

Writers are generally agreed that the culture of the people is intertwined with their religious faith. Hill, in discussing southern Protestanism wrote, ". . .formal theological propositions are always filtered through cultural experience . . . the religious factor is not official creeds but what people perceive the church's truth-claims to be, in line with the complex of assumptions and pictures with which cultural participation has equipped them."[48] Hudson saw the religious belief system of the rural South being enmeshed with the larger culture. Salvation was seen as pivotal for the fundamentalist Christian belief-system and it enabled the individual to ". . . make some kind of sense out of the world in which he finds himself."[49] Nelson has concluded that the "consequences of the enmeshing of the religious and the more general culture in the South should be assessed."[50]

In a study of religion in West Virginia, Photiadis observed that "If one were to consider one significant part of Appalachian culture which appears to be more typically Appalachian than other parts, undoubtedly it would be Appalachian religion." He also pointed out that ". . . small size, homogeneity and isolation are attributes which form the building of a community social system characterized by high cohesiveness and, in turn, favors preservation of old institutional forms, including those associated to religion and resistent to change. In other words, there was, and to an extent still is, a tendency in the small community to retain the religion of the early settlers."[51] Brown and Schwarzweller found in their

Beech Creek studies that while puritanism of the people was not exactly the same as that of early settlers, it was nevertheless a form of puritanism, and that it was woven into one of the fundamental value complexes in the culture. A belief prevailed that every man should be economically independent and that poverty was due to individual failings. Thus, the "belief system not only legitimized but sanctioned the individual's drive toward economic success, his concern for the future and repression of immediate desires, his hard work and his conviction that he had within himself the power to 'become'."[52]

Ford observed in his writing that fatalism developed in the mountains in response to the same circumstances that were responsible for the other-wordly emphasis of mountain religion. Both philosophies share the premise that life is governed by external forces over which humans have little or no control. This belief seemed necessary to withstand the harshness of mountain life.[53] Simpkins referring to this same characteristic put it in a much positive light by calling it "situational realism."

Maurer[54] observed "the heart of our mountain heritage lies in our religious faith . . . it was religion that gave meaning to the mountain way of life."

Jones contended that:

> One has to understand the religion of the mountaineer before he can begin to understand mountaineers. In the beginning we were Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and other formally organized denominations, but these churches required an educated clergy and centralized organization, impractical requirements in the wilderness, and so locally autonomous sects grew up. These individualistic churches stressed the fundamentals of the faith and depended on local resources and leadership.
>
> Many social reformers . . . view the local sect churches as a hindrance to social progress. What they fail to see is that it was the church which helped sustain us and made life worth living in grim situations. Religion shaped our lives, but at the same time we shaped our religion. Culture and religion are intertwined. The life on the frontier did not allow for an optimistic social gospel. One was lucky if he endured. Hard work did not bring a sure reward. Therefore the religion became fatalistic and stressed rewards in another life. The important thing was to get religion--get saved--which meant accepting Jesus as one's personal savior. It was and is a realistic religion which fitted a realistic people. It is based on belief in the Original Sin, that man is falliable, that he will fail, does fail. We mountaineers readily see that the human tragedy is this, that man sees so clearly what he should do and what he should not do and yet he fails so consistently . . . . There is strong belief in the Golden Rule. These beliefs, and variations on them, have sustained us, have given our lives meaning and have helped us to rationalize our lack of material success. Every group of people must have meaning in their lives, must believe in themselves. Religion helps to make this belief possible. There are few Appalachian atheists. . . . Many of the values and beliefs have religious origins."[55]

Kaplan, in his description of the religious life in Blue Ridge, most insightfully showed the direct relationship of the religious faith to the

behavior of the residents. "Much of their religious service is concerned with open talk about low social and economic status, but they believe that the mansion of heaven will compensate them for their low positions. Indeed, many believe that suffering makes them holier in this life."[56]

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

In recognition of the persistence of the cultural underlay permeating in varying degrees the life style of West Virginians today, the purpose of the research was to determine: (1) which of the cultural values identified with Appalachian culture are endorsed by West Virginia extension agents and reflected in their work; (2) which of these selected cultural values seem to reflect a distinctive Appalachian culture today; and (3) the extent to which endorsement of these values is associated with effectiveness in extension work.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Culture, broadly defined, is a way of life. The Appalachian subculture thus embraces those apparent distinctive patterns of living found in the region which give it an identity and set it apart from mainstream American society. Culture, theoretically conceptualized, is knowledge which exists on a number of interrelated levels.[57] On the most abstract level, culture is the ontology (ideas about the meaning of being) and the cosmology (ideas about the meaning of the universe) of a society. It is a system of knowledge that conceptualizes and describes the nature of man and the nature of the universe. Ontological and cosmological conceptualizations determine, through the questions they allow one to ask, the answers to those questions as they are manifest in the values and norms of a society.

The second level of culture is comprised of values and norms. Values represent the goals of social action and norms represent the rules for attaining those goals. These values and norms are specific to a given culture deprived from the ontological and cosmological conceptualizations. These values give meaning to life in the context of the ontological frame of reference.

On the third level, both the ontological and the normative levels of culture are manifested by the artifacts of the culture. These artifacts are the tangible products of expressed activity.

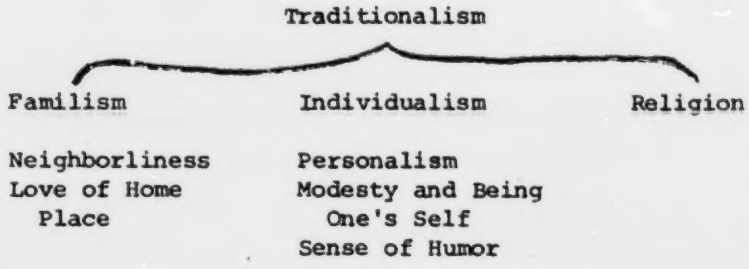
The focus of attention of the research was on a pattern of selected values that have been identified as being characteristic of Appalachian culture. Students of the culture generally agree that this is the pattern of values most clearly reflected in the culture.[58] Most of the values are not unique to Appalachia but the cultural distinctiveness is reflected in the pattern of the values. Under the umbrella of traditionalism, three distinct clusters are observable: (1) familism, neighborliness and love of home place; (2) individualism, personalism, modesty and being one's self, and sense of humor; and (3) religion.

The following diagram shows how the Appalachian value pattern fits into the conceptual framework.

Level I Ontological and Cosmological Level
(Overall meaning to life and Creation)

Level II Values (and Norms)

Appalachian Value Pattern



METHODOLOGY

The general methodological approach to the study involved the use of two data collecting instruments designed specifically for the study. A Kluckholn (behavioral) type questionnaire based on behavior response to situations was used to assess the reflection of Appalachian cultural values in educational programming of extension agents. The second instrument was a Likert type attitudinal scale of eighteen items designed to measure the agents' endorsement of Appalachian values. Both instruments were administered to extension agents in West Virginia, an Appalachian state; North Dakota, a rural non-Appalachian state; and New Jersey, an urban non-Appalachian state. Agent effectiveness in West Virginia was assessed using a seventeen item job related ranking guide covering four areas: competency, leadership, relationships and professionalism. Effectiveness for each item was rated on a five point scale by field administrators.

The response to these instruments and a comparison of responses between states and groups within the states constituted the major approach to data analysis. Useable questionnaires were returned by 86% of the West Virginia, 87% of the North Dakota, and 70% of the New Jersey samples.

Table 1 provides a profile of the samples. The data indicate a much higher percentage of agents in the 25 years and under group in West Virginia (22.8%) and in North Dakota (18.8%) than in New Jersey (1.3%). Highly correlated with age is tenure where New Jersey indicates less agents (28.2%) with under five years' experience compared to West Virginia (45.6%) and North Dakota (49.0%).

All states have a greater percentage of male agents; however, North Dakota (70.8%) and New Jersey (60.3%) show a much larger group than West Virginia (55.9%). Correspondingly, North Dakota (62.5%) and New Jersey (38.5%) show more agriculture trained agents than West Virginia (28.7%), while West Virginia (29.4%) shows

TABLE 1

PROFILE OF AGENTS IN WEST VIRGINIA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND NEW JERSEY BY AGE, SEX, FIELD OF STUDY, TENURE, POSITION, AND HIGHEST DEGREE

	West Virginia (N=136)	N. Dakota (N=96)	N. Jersey (N=78)
Age			
25 years and under	22.8%	18.8%	1.3%
26 - 35 years	26.5	36.5	23.1
36 years and over	50.0	43.8	73.1
Sex			
Male	55.9	70.8	60.3
Female	44.1	28.1	38.5
Field of Study			
Agriculture	28.7	62.5	38.5
Home Economics	25.0	27.1	25.6
Education	29.4	5.2	25.6
Social Sciences	13.2	2.1	9.0
Tenure			
Under 1 year	11.8	12.5	0.0
2 - 5 years	33.8	36.5	28.2
6 - 10 years	11.8	10.4	10.3
11 - 20 years	19.9	24.0	38.5
21 and over	10.3	10.3	19.2
Highest Degree			
Bachelor	40.4	81.3	50.0
Master	58.8	18.8	48.7
Position			
County Agent	36.0	63.5	62.8
Home Demonstration Agent	24.3	27.1	24.4
4-H Agent	30.9	2.1	9.0

larger groups trained in education than North Dakota (5.2%) and New Jersey (25.6%). West Virginia agents have a significantly larger group holding masters degrees (58.8%) compared to North Dakota (18.8%) and New Jersey (48.7%).

Of the 136 agents constituting the West Virginia sample, 89.0% are native to West Virginia, 8.1% are native to the Appalachian area, and only 2.9% are non-Appalachian.

FINDINGS

Findings indicate the data generally tend to support the research hypothesis. In addition, West Virginia agents, while endorsing the Appalachian cultural values, also endorsed six mainstream cultural values giving further support to the bi-cultural nature of their value system.

Table 2 indicates the degree of sensitivity of West Virginia agents to Appalachian cultural values embodied in the nineteen professional behavioral statements. Of the group, over half (53.6%) of the agents responded correctly to eleven or more of the behavioral statements, accounting for 58% of all correct answers. Less than half of the agents (46.4%) responded with fewer than eleven correct answers, accounting for the remaining 42% of correct responses. The data indicate that West Virginia agents generally tend to be sensitive to and take into account Appalachian cultural values in educational programming. This is especially so in the Individualism value cluster where Personalism (89%),[1] Sense of Humor (71%) and Modesty (60%) came through strong. Traditionalism (66%) and Familism (61%) also received substantial response.

The influence of age which is highly correlated with tenure and thus reflects experience in extension programs is, as one would expect, generally related to sensitivity to cultural values. The data indicate that the older (36 years and over), more experienced agents in West Virginia are more sensitive to the cultural values embodied in the professional behavioral statements than the younger (25 years or less), less experienced agents. Thus the relatively substantial proportion of West Virginia agents (22.8%) under 25 years of age and limited experience tend to depress or have a levelling-out effect upon the demonstrated sensitivity of West Virginia agents as a whole to Appalachian cultural values. This would tend to support the contention that training of young agents, including those native to West Virginia, would be important to sensitize them to Appalachian cultural values.

The data indicate very little difference in sensitivity to the cultural values on the part of male (55.3% correct answers) and female (51.7% correct answers) agents as a whole. However, significant differences do emerge on sensitivity to specific cultural values. Male agents exhibit greater sensitivity to the values: Sense of Humor (62.2% vs. 39.7%), Modesty (64.5% vs. 53.3%), Individualism (59.2% vs. 39%), and Neighborliness (59.2% vs. 45.8%); while female agents demonstrate greater sensitivity to the value, Love of Home Place (50.0% vs. 33.8%). Sensitivity to the value of Religion was divided with males stronger on one question and females on the other.

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[1]Per cent of the correct response to situational statements.

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TABLE 2

ENDORSEMENT OF APPALACHIAN CULTURAL VALUES AMONG WEST VIRGINIA AGENTS AS MEASURED BY SITUATIONAL STATEMENTS BY AGE, SEX, AND FIELD OF STUDY

	W. Va.	Age		Sex		Field of Study	
		Y	O	M	F	Agriculture Home Economics	Education Social Sciences
	(N=136)	(N=31)	(N=68)	(N=76)	(N=60)	(N=73)	(N=58)
High	53.6%	48.4%	60.3%	55.3%	51.7%	53.4%	58.6%
Low	46.4%	51.6%	39.7%	44.7%	48.3%	46.6%	41.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

With respect to field of study, agents were grouped by educational background into two groups: the traditional fields of study, agriculture and home economics compared to the less traditional fields of study of education and social sciences. On the whole the two groups showed little difference in their sensitivity to cultural values by the percentage of correct answers: some slight advantage in favor of education and social science training (58.6% vs. 53.4%). However interesting differences in degree of sensitivity appeared in relation to specific cultural values. Agents with more traditional training in the fields of agriculture and home economics showed greater sensitivity to the cultural values Familism (57.1% vs. 51.8%), Love of Home Place (92.5% vs. 28.6%) and Religion (47.1% vs. 29.3%). On the other hand, agents whose fields of study were in education and the social sciences displayed greater sensitivity to the cultural values Traditionalism (46.6% vs. 27.1%), Neighborliness (58.7% vs. 47.1%) and Modesty (41.4% vs. 31.9%).

Table 3 indicates the degree of endorsement of West Virginia agents to the nine cultural values included in the attitudinal scale. Of the total groups, 58.9% of the agents indicated significant endorsement and scored more than thirty-four out of a possible forty-five points on the five point attitudinal scale accounting for 57.0% of the total accumulated scores. 41.1% of the agents scored less than 34 points, accounting for 43.0% of the accumulated score. The data indicate that West Virginia agents generally endorse Appalachian cultural values in educational programming. Significant high endorsement was found in the Individualism value cluster where responses in the two top categories, very important and somewhat important, scores on Personalism (95.5%), Sense of Humor (95.6%), and Individualism (90.4%), along with Neighborliness (96.3%) ranked high. Modesty (56.6%), Familism (52.9%), and Religion (51.4%) also received substantial scores. (See Table 4)

While West Virginia agents endorsed the Appalachian values, data indicate they also endorsed six of the nine mainstream American values interspersed with the nine Appalachian values making up the attitudinal scale with a mean score falling in the two top categories, very important and somewhat important. This would indicate that agents working in Appalachia seem to be acculturated to a bicultural environment.

In summary, the data from both the attitudinal scale and the professional behavioral situational statements indicate West Virginia extension agents tend to be sensitive to Appalachian cultural values and take them into consideration in educational programming.

Dividing the North Dakota and New Jersey data on the same criteria as the West Virginia group, Table 5 compares the sensitivity of agents in West Virginia, North Dakota, and New Jersey to Appalachian cultural values as measured by their response to the behavioral situation instrument. The data indicate West Virginia agents (53.8%), display considerably greater sensitivity to Appalachian cultural values than agents from rural North Dakota (39.5%), or urban New Jersey (32.1%) in the number who responded correctly to eleven or more of the behavioral situational statements. Thus data would appear to give rather substantial support to the hypothesis indicating the continuing existence in West Virginia of a distinctive Appalachian cultural value pattern.

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TABLE 3

ENDORSEMENT OF APPALACHIAN CULTURAL VALUES AMONG WEST VIRGINIA AGENTS AS MEASURED BY ATTITUDINAL SCALE BY AGE, SEX, AND FIELD OF STUDY

	W. Va.	Age		Sex		Field of Study	
		Y	O	M	F	Agriculture Home Economics	Education Social Sciences
	(N=136)	(N=31)	(N=67)	(N=76)	(N=60)	(N=73)	(N=58)
High	58.9%	41.9%	58.1%	52.6%	66.7%	65.8%	51.7%
Low	41.1%	60.9%	39.1%	47.4%	33.3%	34.2%	48.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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TABLE 4

ENDORSEMENT OF APPALACHIAN CULTURAL VALUES BY WEST VIRGINIA AGENTS AS MEASURED BY ATTITUDINAL SCALE (N=136)

	Mean* Score	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	Unimportant
Traditionalism	2.9	7.4%	18.4%	47.8%	21.3%	5.1%
Individualism	1.6	48.5	41.9	8.8	0.7	0.0
Personalism	1.3	65.4	30.1	3.7	0.7	0.0
Sense of Humor	1.5	54.4	41.2	2.9	1.5	0.0
Modesty	2.4	15.4	41.2	29.4	11.0	2.2
Familism	2.4	16.9	36.0	32.4	11.0	2.9
Neighborliness	1.2	75.0	21.3	3.7	0.0	0.0
Love of Home Place	3.3	5.9	12.5	30.9	42.6	8.1
Religion	2.4	17.6	33.8	34.6	11.8	2.2

*The mean score was based on a 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant) scale.

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TABLE 5

ENDORSEMENT OF APPALACHIAN CULTURAL VALUES AMONG WEST VIRGINIA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND NEW JERSEY AGENTS AS MEASURED BY SITUATIONAL STATEMENTS

Mean Correct Responses 10.6	W. Va. (N=136)	N. Dakota (N=96)	N. Jersey (N=78)
11 or more correct responses	53.6%	39.5%	32.1%
10 or less correct responses	46.4	60.5	65.5

Effectiveness

The level of professional performance of West Virginia extension agents was measured by the total score received on the Agent Ranking Guide as judged by the respective Area Division Leaders. Agents who received an accumulated score of 70 or above were classified as the more effective group (45.4%) while agents scoring 56 or below (23.8%) were classified as the less effective group. The remaining portion (30.8%) of agents scored in the middle or median group.

When the data were divided into age groups, closely correlated with tenure, a significant relationship between effectiveness and endorsement of cultural values was found among West Virginia agents. Table 6 indicates the extent of relationship between age of agents and effectiveness of performance. Younger agents (under 25 years of age) were ranked evenly 50% in the less effective group and 50% in the more effective group. As age increases, the proportion of agents ranked in the more effective group increases and the proportion in the less effective group decreases. Older agents (46 years and over) had the highest proportion, 82.6%, ranked in the more effective performance group and the smallest proportion, 18.4%, ranked in the less effective performance group.

When the added factor of professional experience as indicated by tenure or years of service, Table 7, was taken into consideration, an important pattern began to emerge. The data indicate the existence of substantial interrelationships between age, tenure, and effectiveness of professional performance. From all indications older, more experienced agents tend to be the most effective educational programmers.

TABLE 6

PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS OF WEST VIRGINIA AGENTS
BY AGE

	Effectiveness	
	Less N=31	More N=59
Age		
Under 25 years (N=18)	50.0%	50.0%
26 - - 35 (N=26)	42.3	57.7
36 - 45 (N=23)	30.5	69.5
46 and over (N=23)	18.4	82.6

TABLE 7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND TENURE OF WEST VIRGINIA AGENTS

	Years in Extension				
	Under 1 (N=16)	1 - 5 (N=46)	6 - 10 (N=16)	11 - 20 (N=27)	21 and over (N=13)
Age					
Under 25 (N=29)	37.9%	62.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
26 - 35 (N=35)	14.3	62.9	17.1	5.7	0.0
36 - 45 (N=25)	0.0	12.0	20.0	64.0	4.0
46 - 55 (N=20)	0.0	10.0	10.0	35.0	45.0
Over 56 (N=9)	0.0	11.1	33.3	22.2	33.3

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IMPLICATIONS

In view of the findings of the research indicating the continuing existence of an Appalachian culture in varying degrees throughout West Virginia and the association among age, tenure, and effectiveness of extension agents' performance and sensitivity to Appalachian cultural values, several implications for training of educational programmers become apparent.

It appears as though the process of education for native Appalachians tends to change their value pattern in the direction of mainstream society, desensitizing them on the rational level to their native culture. Over a period of years, experience in educational programming in Appalachia tends to restore a sensitivity to the cultural values on a functional programming level. By appropriate training it is believed the process of resensitizing to Appalachian cultural values and their influence in educational programming could appreciably enhance the effectiveness of agent performance in a shorter period of time.

1. An understanding and recognition of the cultural values of clientele of educational programmers is to be seen as one aspect of the total educational process. Sensitivity to the value patterns held by local people is foundational to acceptance and to the development of relationships necessary to provide a bridge for education. Training designed to fit educational programs into the cultural context of the recipients is seen as necessary for effective educational programming.

2. Training in the identification and understanding of the culture--its heterogeneous character and variation throughout the state, the transitional nature of the culture and varying degrees in the process of adjustment under the pressure of a dominant mainstream culture, and consequent bicultural adjustments and patterns of living on the part of native residents.

3. Development of: (a) a healthy respect and appreciation of Appalachian cultural values, eliminating any tendency toward a condescending or patronizing attitude; (b) understanding of the adjustments that Appalachian residents are undergoing and why they resist giving up their old ways; (c) insight into what Appalachian culture may have to contribute to mainstream society.

Training of this type has implications beyond the cooperative extension service, embracing the employees of private and public agencies involved in educational and developmental activities in West Virginia, as well as in-migrants who choose to live and work in the state. Further, the introduction of cultural training of this nature in the curriculum of higher education institutions preparing educators and other professional personnel to work in the state would seem desirable.

Consideration of cultural factors in the recruitment and assignment of personnel in the varying cultural situations to be found across the state would also appear relevant.

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